Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims:

1-17 **(Canceled)**

18. **(Currently Amended)** A process for preparing modified metal oxides or metal aquoxides that are dispersible in organic solvents comprising:

(I) reacting at a temperature of above 0°C and not exceeding 90°C.

(A) at least one metal oxide or metal aquoxide having a crystallite size of 4 to 100 nm, determined by x-ray diffraction on the 021 reflex, and a particle size of 5 to 500 nm, determined by photon correlation spectroscopy in dispersion;

with

(B) a modifier consisting essentially of at least one organic sulfonic acid wherein

(i) in case the reaction takes place in a mainly aqueous medium or in the absence of a diluent/solvent, the organic sulfonic acid is a mono-, di-, or trialkylbenzene sulfonic acid, wherein the alkyl residue(s) are C_1 to C_6 alkyl residue(s) and wherein the component (A), calculated as metal oxide, and (B) are used at weight ratios from 98:2 to 70:30, or

(ii) in case the reaction takes place in the presence of an organic aprotic solvent or an organic protic solvent, the organic sulfonic acid

comprises at least 14 carbon atoms and at least one aromatic ring, and wherein the components (A), calculated as metal oxide, and (B) are used at weight ratios from 98:2 to 70:30, ~~and~~

(II) drying the modified metal oxide or metal aquaoxide to produce a substantially non-water dispersible dried modified metal oxide or metal aquoxide; and~~,~~

(III) dispersing the dried modified metal oxide or metal aquoxide in an organic solvent.

19. **(Previously Presented)** The process according to claim 18, characterized in that said metal oxide or metal aquoxide contains aluminum.

20. **(Previously Presented)** The process according to claim 19 wherein said metal oxide or metal aquoxide are selected from the group consisting of aluminas, alumina hydrates, aluminum silicate, Si/Al mixed oxides and mixtures thereof.

21. **(Previously Presented)** The process according to claim 20 wherein said alumina hydrates are selected from the group consisting of boehmite, pseudoboehmite and mixtures thereof.

22. **(Previously Presented)** The process according to any one of claims 18-21, characterized in that the organic sulfonic acid is a toluenesulfonic acid.

23. **(Previously Presented)** The process according to claim 22 wherein said toluenesulfonic acid is p-toluenesulfonic acid.

24. **(Previously Presented)** The process according to any one of claims 18-21, characterized in that the organic sulfonic acid has the formula $R\text{-}SO_3H$, wherein R is an alkyl-substituted aromatic hydrocarbon residue with 16 to 24 carbon atoms.

25. **(Cancelled)**

26. **(Cancelled)**

27. **(Previously Presented)** The process according to any one of claims 18-21, characterized in that the metal oxides or metal aquoxides are brought into contact with the organic sulfonic acid for a period of time of from 30 seconds to 7 days.

28. **(Previously Presented)** The process according to claim 27 wherein the period of time is from 30 to 90 minutes.

29. **(Previously Presented)** The process of claim 27 conducted with stirring.

30. **(Previously Presented)** The process according to any one of claims 18-21, characterized in that the modified metal oxides or metal aquoxides are dried by spray drying, freeze drying, microwave drying, drying in supercritical solvents, filtration, contact drying, or rotary drum drying.

31. **(Previously Presented)** The process according to any one of claims 18-21, characterized in that the modified metal oxides or metal aquoxides are dispersed in organic solvent as dispersions having a solids content of 10 to 35 wt%.

32. **(Previously Presented)** The process according to claim 31 wherein the solids content is from 20 to 30 weight percent.

33. **(Previously Presented)** The process according to any one of claims 18-21, characterized in that the metal oxides or metal aquoxides are taken up in an

organic solvent and this solvent is exchanged for a second solvent.

34. **(Currently Amended)** A ~~The~~ metal oxide or metal aquoxide dispersion comprising a metal oxide or metal aquoxide according to any one of claims 18-21, and a dispersant selected from the group consisting of

- an aprotic polar organic solvent,
- a protic, polar organic solvent having at least two carbon atoms,
- an apolar organic solvent and mixtures thereof.

35. **(Currently Amended)** A ~~The~~ dispersion according to claim 34 wherein the dispersion contains an additive comprising at least one organic polymeric/oligomeric viscosity-adjusting agent.

36. **(Currently Amended)** A ~~The~~ dispersion according to claim 35 wherein the viscosity-adjusting agent is selected from the group consisting of cellulose, a cellulose derivative, a polyacrylate, a polyvinyl alcohol and mixtures thereof.

37. **(Currently Amended)** A ~~The~~ dispersion according to claim 36, characterized in that the dispersant is selected from the group consisting of a solvent-

based paint, lacquer, a water-insoluble plastic, and mixtures thereof.

38. **(Previously Presented)** A process according to any one of claims 18-21, characterized in that the modified metal oxides or metal aquoxides are processed into molded articles by extrusion, pelleting, or spherical drop forming processes.

39. **(New)** The modified metal oxide or metal aquoxide prepared according to any of claims 18-21, dispersed in a hydrophobic material selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl chloride, laquer/paint based on organic solvents and mixtures thereof.

40. **(New)** A transparent coating comprising a modified metal oxide or metal aquoxide prepared according to any one of claims 18-21 and a transparent coating agent.

Respectfully submitted,

C. James Bushman
Reg. No. 24,810

Date: April 14, 2004

BROWNING BUSHMAN
5718 Westheimer, Suite 1800
Houston, TX 77057
Tel.: (713) 266-5593
Fax: (713) 266-5169

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I certify that this document and fee is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail under 37 C.F.R. 1.8 and is addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on April 14, 2004.

By:_____
Cathy Hayes

cth-C:\Client\cjb\muller\40suppamendment.wpd